

Anchor design was official perfin for Imperial Japanese Navy

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Former Bulletin editor John Lyding (#116L) uses an anchor perfin (Des61IP) on his mail. It's a perfectly appropriate vanity perfin for a retired Navy officer. There's one other anchor pattern on U.S.

stamps—that of North and Judd, ship builders, of New Britain, CT. It's Des3 in the U.S. catalog.

Anchor perfins are known on the stamps of many other countries as well, including Germany, Lithuania, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium, Czechoslova-

kia, Great Britain, and of course, Japan.

In Japan, the anchor was a widely recognized and almost sacred emblem of the Im-



Anchor pattern of Japanese Navy appeared on many issues.

perial Japanese Navy. Beginning in 1914, it was turned into the official perfin for Imperial Naval forces throughout Ja-

pan. The Adachi catalog lists eleven varieties of the anchor that were used by the Japanese Navy at various times and various locations from 1914 until the war ended in 1945.

Many of the anchor perfins of Japan are somewhat common because they were so widely used. Supplies were provided to numerous offices within the Navy Ministry and to Navy bases all over Japan. Most are fairly straight-forward designs, but one, used at the giant Sasebo Navy

Base in southern Japan, is unusual.

Incorporated into the anchor design are the three Japanese syllabic characters for SA, SE, and BO with the character for BO actually serving as the crosspiece and part of the shaft of the anchor. The Sasebo



Japanese characters for SA-SE-BO are incorporated into the design of this anchor design used at the Japanese naval base.

perfin is scarce and particularly desirable on cover.

During World War II, Sasebo was a major base of operations for the

Japanese Navy. It was opened in 1883 when a young Lieutenant Commander Heihachiro Togo nominated the little fishing village not far from Nagasaki to be the home of what was then just a fledgling navy. In 1904, it was from Sasebo that ships of the Japanese Navy set sail under the command of Admiral Togo and defeated the Russian Baltic Fleet at the Battle of Tsushima.

Today, the base serves the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and is home to four ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet.